What do I need to know about Self-assessment and Performance Improvement CME?

Why these changes to certification maintenance?

Beginning in 2014, certified PAs started to transition to a 10-year certification maintenance cycle that includes CME requirements related to self-assessment and to performance improvement (PI).

These more specific requirements were developed to incorporate a broader range of important PA competencies into the certification maintenance process, which previously focused almost exclusively on medical knowledge. For example, PI-CME addresses competencies in the areas of practice-based learning and improvement, system-based practice and patient care.

PI-CME and self-assessment CME foster the continuous professional development that is integral to effective practice as a health care provider, as they encourage PAs to seek and apply knowledge that is relevant to their daily practice.

When do these requirements begin?

These CME requirements go into effect when you transition into the 10 year certification maintenance cycle. Sign into your record at www.nccpa.net to see when you switch to the 10-year process.

Will the new process take more time than traditional CME?

There is no evidence that either self-assessment or PI activities require more time than traditional CME. Both of these “new” types of CME are generally accomplished online and so do not require travel or special accommodations to complete. While a PI-CME activity may take three to six months to complete, this includes a substantial period between the initial and final portions of the overall activity. The amount of actual time devoted to the overall activity generally does not exceed 20 hours although it is approved for 20 Category 1 PI CME credits. Credit for PI-CME activities is earned for completing the stages through a self-reflective process. Actual “performance improvement” does not need to be documented to earn credit.

What is Self-Assessment CME?

Self-assessment is a systematic process of reviewing your current knowledge and skills to identify gaps and help to prioritize your learning plans. Self-assessment activities often take the form of multiple-choice exams and may also use cases to test the application of knowledge to clinical settings. Learners generally receive immediate feedback and are directed to key references for further study as needed. Most self-assessment CME activities are completed online and do not require travel or participation in live meetings.
What is PI-CME?

PI-CME is the active application of learning to improve your practice. There are 3 basic ways to complete the PI-CME requirement:

- Participate in an activity or project that has been developed by a professional association or other entity and has been approved by AAPA for Category 1 PI-CME credit
- Participate in an activity developed by or for your institution that focuses on performance/quality improvement and has been approved by AAPA for Category 1 PI-CME credit
- Develop your own PI-CME activity by selecting clinical measures that apply to your specific practice area from a vast library of such measures (coming soon from AAPA)

Most PI-CME activities are completed online and do not require travel or participation in live meetings.

40 and 40 in 4

The overall 10-year certification maintenance cycle is divided into five two-year CME cycles, during each of which 100 credits of CME must be earned, with at least 50 of those credits being designated as Category 1 (same as when PAs were in a 6-year cycle).

You have flexibility in any given two-year cycle to earn PI-CME credits, self-assessment credits or some of both. However, over the course of those first four cycles (spanning approximately eight years), you have to earn both types of CME: at least 40 credits of PI-CME and at least 40 credits of self-assessment CME.

Want access to the latest list of approved self-assessment and PI-CME activities?

You can find a list of approved self-assessment and PI-CME activities on our website at www.nccpa.net/finding-sa-and-pi-cme.

AAPA is actively identifying and developing additional self-assessment and PI-CME activities. All activities must receive PI-CME or self-assessment credit approval from AAPA to satisfy the new requirements.

Track Your CME Progress

The “Dashboard” on your individual record on NCCPA’s website will help you track what you’ve earned and what you still need to earn to fulfill these requirements.